

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Antonito, CO which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

I can offer local broadcast channels to all of my customers when they subscribe to the DISH Network. This is not the case for retailers in medium and small-sized markets. Currently, EchoStar offers local broadcast service in only 36 television markets. The merger will allow the new company to end the duplication of programming and free up hundreds of channels allowing consumers in all 210 television markets across the country to receive their local broadcast channels. As a DISH Network retailer, I am very excited by this development because satellite TV will be perceived nationally as real alternative to cable.

If the merger is approved, the new EchoStar will provide consumers in my area an affordable high speed Internet access service via satellite. There are a small number of customers in my area who do enjoy access to high-speed Internet access service via cable and DSL service. For them, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, potentially driving down prices of DSL and cable providers. However, the majority of the homes, schools and businesses in my area are beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires. For these customers, the new EchoStar would be their only chance of getting an affordable high speed Internet service.

Whether or not my customers have access to cable, and most do not, all of them will benefit from the new company's ability to better compete with cable. EchoStar has pledged to offer nationwide prices and services -- bringing the benefits of vigorous competition with cable -- to customers everywhere.

Since its inception, direct broadcast satellite TV providers have offered uniform, nationwide pricing structures, and the new company has guaranteed that it will continue this practice. Nationwide pricing offers customers in rural America the full benefits of the rigorous competition occurring in urban and suburban areas. I can rest assured that satellite TV will remain a competitively priced product.

EchoStar will not be able to compete effectively with the cable companies in the future unless it has the ability to match their technological innovations. The merger will allow the new EchoStar to provide HDTV, Interactive TV, and near video-on-demand. The other benefits outlined above are important, but these are the most important ones for me. Please support the EchoStar-Hughes merger, and

help bring these advanced television services to consumers sooner rather than later.

Sincerely,

Chuck Johnson  
38511 Highway 17  
Antonito, CO 81120